

What is claimed is:

1. A method for use in an information assistance system, comprising:
receiving a current call from a user, and signals containing an identifier associated
with the user;
5 determining whether the current call should be placed in a queue to wait for a
service provider to render an information assistance service;
if the current call should be placed in a queue, searching a data source for data
associated with the user based on the identifier, the data concerning at least one wait period
before an information assistance service was rendered in at least one prior call to the system, the
10 at least one prior call being identifiable by the identifier; and
placing the current call in a queue based on the data.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein a position in the queue in which the current call is
placed is a function of a difference between the at least one wait period and a predetermined
15 time.
3. The method of claim 2 wherein the predetermined time is zero.
4. The method of claim 1 wherein the at least one wait period includes a plurality of
20 wait periods, and the at least one prior call includes a plurality of prior calls, a position in the
queue in which the current call is placed is a function of a sum of the wait periods.
5. The method of claim 1 wherein the at least one wait period includes a plurality of
wait periods, and the at least one prior call includes a plurality of prior calls, a position in the
25 queue in which the current call is placed is a function of an average of the wait periods over the
number of prior calls.
6. The method of claim 1 wherein the at least one prior call occurred in a
predetermined period.
- 30 7. The method of claim 1 wherein the service provider includes an operator.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein the identifier includes an automatic number identification (ANI) contained in the signals.

5 9. The method of claim 1 wherein if the current call does not incur a wait period in excess of a predetermined time, the data is revised to reflect a reduction of a length of the at least one wait period.

10. The method of claim 9 wherein the predetermined time is zero.

10 11. The method of claim 1 wherein in placing the current call in the queue, the at least one wait period is compared with a second wait period associated with a second call in the queue.

15 12. The method of claim 1 wherein the information assistance service includes searching a second data source for a telephone number of a desired party.

13. An information assistance system, comprising:
an interface for receiving a current call from a user, and signals containing an
20 identifier associated with the user;
a processor for determining whether the current call should be placed in a queue to wait for a service provider to render an information assistance service;
a data source, if the current call should be placed in a queue, the data source being
searched for data associated with the user based on the identifier, the data concerning at least one
25 wait period before an information assistance service was rendered in at least one prior call to the system, the at least one prior call being identifiable by the identifier; and
a mechanism for placing the current call in a queue based on the data.

14. The system of claim 13 wherein a position in the queue in which the current call
30 is placed is a function of a difference between the at least one wait period and a predetermined time.

15. The system of claim 14 wherein the predetermined time is zero.

16. The system of claim 13 wherein the at least one wait period includes a plurality of wait periods, and the at least one prior call includes a plurality of prior calls, a position in the queue in which the current call is placed is a function of a sum of the wait periods.

17. The system of claim 13 wherein the at least one wait period includes a plurality of wait periods, and the at least one prior call includes a plurality of prior calls, a position in the queue in which the current call is placed is a function of an average of the wait periods over the number of prior calls.

18. The system of claim 13 wherein the at least one prior call occurred in a predetermined period.

19. The system of claim 13 wherein the service provider includes an operator.

20. The system of claim 13 wherein the identifier includes an ANI contained in the signals.

21. The system of claim 13 wherein if the current call does not incur a wait period in excess of a predetermined time, the data is revised to reflect a reduction of a length of the at least one wait period.

22. The system of claim 21 wherein the predetermined time is zero.

23. The system of claim 13 wherein in placing the current call in the queue, the at least one wait period is compared with a second wait period associated with a second call in the queue.

24. The system of claim 13 wherein the information assistance service includes searching a second data source for a telephone number of a desired party.